

In last week's portion, VaYishlach, Jacob returned to his father's house after being with Laban for 22 years. On his way, he wrestled with Esau's angel, and then confronted Esau himself.

Aliyah # 1

Jacob now dwells in Chevron, where his father had lived. This aliyah begins the interesting story of Joseph, Jacob's firstborn son from his wife Rachel. We learn that Jacob favors Joseph, so he makes him a colorful, striped coat. Also, Joseph has a habit of reporting bad things about his brothers to their father.

Finally, Joseph has two dreams implying that he will eventually rule over his brothers. In the first dream there were eleven bundles of grain bowing down to Joseph's bundle. And in the second dream there were eleven stars, the sun and the moon, surrounding Joseph and bowing down to him.

All this adds up to Joseph's brothers hating him so much that they want to kill him.

Aliyah # 2

Joseph's brothers go off to tend their father's flock in Shechem. Jacob sends Joseph to see how the brothers and the flock are doing. The brothers see him approaching and plot to kill him, but Reuben, the oldest, doesn't want to harm Joseph. He suggests that they not kill him, and instead throw him into a pit. Reuben plans to secretly return and rescue Joseph from the pit later on.

Aliyah # 3

When Joseph arrives, his brothers strip him of his fancy coat and cast him into the pit. They subsequently sell him to a caravan of Arab spice merchants who are traveling to Egypt. Then the brothers dip Joseph's coat into blood, and bring it to their father

as evidence of Joseph's being devoured by a wild beast. Jacob mourns the loss of his favorite son and cannot be comforted.

Aliyah # 4

The story of Joseph is interrupted by the episode of Yehudah and Tamar. Yehudah is one of Joseph's brothers, in fact the one who suggested selling him. After Jacob is grieved over the loss of Joseph, Yehudah gets married and has three sons, Er, Onan, and Shelah. He finds a wife named Tamar for his first son, Er, a short while after the marriage Er dies.

Yehudah has his second son marry Tamar in order to fulfill the mitzvah of Yibum (marrying one's brother's wife if the brother passes away and leaves no children). A short time passes and he dies as well. Yehudah hesitates to give his third son to Tamar, so she returns to her father's house as a widow.

Eventually, Yehudah's own wife passes away and he goes on a business trip. Tamar dresses like a prostitute and sits by the side of the road. Yehudah doesn't recognize her and visits her and leaves his signet ring, and she conceives. A few months later, when her pregnancy is evident, Yehudah orders her to be burned. (Some say "burned" here means "branded.") While she is being taken out to be burned, she produces the signet ring and announces that the ring's owner is the baby's father. She is very careful not to embarrass Yehudah in public. (If he didn't admit he was the father, she would not expose him, but instead would allow herself to be burned. From this we learn to what extent we must go to avoid embarrassing someone.)

The child from this unusual union begins a long line that leads to King David, indicating that this entire story was a Divinely orchestrated plan in order to bring about the ultimate birth of Moshiach (the Messiah),

who will be a descendant of King David.

Aliyah # 5

We return to the story of Joseph. Joseph has been brought down to Egypt and sold to Potifar, the captain of Pharaoh's guard. The Torah says that G-d is with Joseph, therefore Joseph and even Potifar do quite well during this time. Joseph is put in charge of Potifar's entire household.

Aliyah # 6

Potifar's wife becomes very attracted to Joseph because he is very handsome and successful. She makes advances toward him, but he steadfastly refuses her. During one such incident, Joseph runs away from Potifar's wife, but she grabs hold of his coat sleeve. When he breaks loose, she is left holding the coat in her hand. She then uses the coat as evidence that it was Joseph who made the advances, and Potifar has Joseph put in prison. But G-d is with Joseph still, and he does very well in prison and is put in charge of all the other prisoners.

Aliyah # 7

Two of Pharaoh's staff are put in prison: his butler and baker. They both have dreams that cause them to become confused and upset, and Joseph interprets the dreams.

The butler dreams about grape clusters from which he squeezes wine, and he gives the wine to Pharaoh. Joseph's interpretation is that the butler will be restored as Pharaoh's servant, which turns out to be true. Joseph asks the butler to mention to Pharaoh that he has been jailed unjustly, but the butler forgets to do it.

The baker dreams about three baskets of bread atop his head; birds nibble from the bread in the top basket. Joseph's interpretation is that the butler will be hung, which also turns out to be true.🕯

Special Chanukah Issue



The Jewish Flame!



Chanukah took place some twelve-hundred years after the giving of the Torah at Sinai. Amazingly enough though, allusions to this holiday were already contained within those infamous five books of Moses.

Here are two instances, both alluding to the actual date with which Chanukah was to occur - the 25th of Kislev.

1. The twenty-fifth word in the Torah is *ohr* (light).
2. The twenty-fifth place of encampment in the journeying of the children of Israel in the wilderness, was *Hasmoneh* - the area where the Holy Temple was later pillaged, leaving only one small flask of pure oil.

From the works of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

Do you remember when, with childish excitement, you planned out which color Chanukah candles from the blue box with the menorah on the front and *maoz tzur* on the back, you would use on the first night? Blue for the first candle and white for the *shamash*, right? Then, on the second night it was red, white and blue, or yellow, blue and pink. Or did you prefer the primary colours?

Each night was a different pattern and the inevitable argument with siblings about who would get which colour. Once it was resolved you sat near the burning candles, watching to see which one would be the last to burn out and mesmerized by their flames.

There were presents, candy-filled dreidles, chocolate Chanukah gelt, potato latkas and the story of the Jews vanquishing the persecutors, for once.

Yet, with all that, some of our fondest Chanukah and Jewish memories revolve around the Chanukah lights. And for good reason.

The Jewish flame -- the soul -- is likened to a candle: "The soul of a man is the lamp of G-d."

How is the soul similar to those little Chanukah candles we light each year? Unlike other matter, which because of the forces of gravity descends to the lowest possible place, the flame of a candle always ascends, continuously striving to unite with its elemental source. The flame does this even though by uniting with its source it would be extinguished.

The Jewish soul is an actual part of G-d. Its very nature compels it constantly to strive to unite with G-d, its source. Though by uniting with G-d it becomes nullified, still it works toward this goal. Sometimes this takes place because of an awakening on the part of the person and sometimes it is like a "gift" from G-d, an arousal from

above that draws the soul ever closer.

Going from the esoteric to the scientific, try this little experiment. Though, as we mentioned before, the nature of the flame (and the soul) is to scintillate upward in an attempt to unite with its source, what if a larger flame is nearby, but not above, the candle? The flame of the candle, believe it or not, will actually bend in an attempt to unite with the larger fire!

This certainly attests to the power of the desire for the flame/soul to be one with its source. How, though, is this union achieved?

A flame coming from a wick remains ignited only if it has something to burn. In the analogy mentioned above, the wick is a person's body while the sparkling flame is the soul. Though the soul / flame is truly a part of G-d this in itself is not enough to allow the wick/body to burn continuously. It needs energy, and that energy is acquired through good deeds.🕯

Candle Lighting

Ottawa

19 December 2003 at 4:03pm

Shabbat ends

Sat. at 5:14pm

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Insights into the Jewish holidays,  
adapted from the works of the Lubavitcher Rebbe



The Chanukah menorah is something which is greatly cherished by G-d. Out of all the services performed in the temple, the nightly lighting of the golden menorah by the High Priest was the most beloved of all acts. In order to understand why this is so a parable tells it best:

A king wished to dine with his friend. Prior to his arrival, the king requested that his friend prepare a meal for him according to his friends' ability.

When the King arrived, he came

flanked by two exquisite golden lamps. Embarrassed at the paltry meal set before such a great king, the friend quickly hid all his preparations under the table.


Realizing his friend to be ashamed, the king comforted him by saying, By your life, I leave all that I have brought with me. I will make use of what is yours, for the sake of my love for you.

When we light the menorah, G-d appreciates this service offered towards Him. Made all the more precious in his eyes because it come from His first-born, His children, His people.

When the Jewish people say This small lamp is better than the

thousands of lamps contained within your creations, then G-d allows this light to shine brighter than the sun itself! Compared to his people, the light of all of creation is but a small spark in the darkness.

When G-d asks of us to prepare a meal for Him, He is approaching us with the greatest sense of generosity and benevolence. He appreciates us, and in turn, we appreciate him.

In return, all he asks is that we bring what we are capable of bringing. Nothing too fancy, just a small little menorah whose wick burns brighter than all the luminaries in the sky above. 

## Ask the Rabbi

Dear Rabbi Berger,  
*Is a woman obligated to light the Menorah?*  
-Louis H.  
Brisbane, QL, Australia

Dear Louis,  
  
There is no distinction between men and women with regards to the obligation to light the menorah.  
  
Although women are normally exempt from all mitzvot which have to be fulfilled at a particular time, there are exceptions to this rule - and Chanukah is one of these exceptions.

The Talmud (Shabbat 23a) explains that a pivotal part of the Maccabi victory was a result of the bravery of a young woman, and therefore women share equal credit in the Chanukah miracle.  
  
So you're curious to hear the story, aren't you? Well here goes:

During the Greek occupation of the Holy Land, there was an especially sadistic general who decreed that any woman who wants to marry must first spend an intimate evening with the general himself.  
  
You can well imagine that at that point caterers who specialized in weddings were hard pressed to find any business... Many women refused to marry. Others married clandestinely, but instead of rejoicing by their wedding, they hearts were pounding in fear, thinking of the punishment which awaited them if they were caught

G-d forbid.  
  
This terror lasted until Yehudis, the daughter of Yochanan the High Priest, took matters into her own hands. Yehudis was engaged to be married, so she cheerfully approached the dwelling of the vicious general and informed him that she had arrived to do her bridal civic duty. The general invited her in, but Yehudis first insisted on having dinner with the general. The general was delighted at the prospect, and allowed Yehudis to serve him some of the delicious cheeses she had brought along for the occasion. The salty cheese made the general quite thirsty, so our well-prepared heroine pulled out some strong wine from her backpack; the general downed the bottle and promptly fell into a deep slumber.

At this point Yehudis drew the general's sword and decapitated him. She wrapped his head in a cloth and went back home. The Jews took the head, prominently displayed it in the city, and when the Greek soldiers saw this they fled in disarray!  
  
Now, although women are obligated to light the menorah, the common custom is that the man of the house lights the menorah, having in mind that the women of the house should be included in this mitzvah. (This is similar to Shabbat candles, which are lit by the women who have the men in mind). But if a woman is alone at home she is certainly obligated to light the menorah herself.

Rabbi M. Berger 

Next week's question: Is a electric menorah fine?  
Send us your questions: [info@theluminary.com](mailto:info@theluminary.com)

### A Canadian Chanukah Miracle

By Zvi Hershovich.

One of the most exciting times of the year for a student studying in Yeshiva is the 8 days of Chanukah. That's the time where our daily learning routine turns over, and for '8 crazy nights' we hop into 'Mivtza tanks' (a.k.a. mobile homes with more posters than a teenagers bedroom), and wander the streets of our city munching doughnuts and potato latkas, yanking innocent people from the cold streets into the trailer-mobile to light the Menorah and warm themselves up.

In 1999, I spent a year studying in Toronto (or so they say). A true-blooded Canadian, I spent the days studying Talmud; discovering how to divorce a woman who went insane, and the nights playing hockey in the nearby park. However, the city atmosphere was in the dumps. The Maple Leafs were in a slump they hadn't been able to get out of since Felix Potvin brought them to the Western Conference Finals in '93.

As Chanukah drew nearer, we were assigned to different Mivtza tanks, and through outright bribery and deceivry, I got myself a seat in the tank going to the Maple Leaf Gardens for a game against the Phoenix Coyotes, who were trying to tie an old Montreal Canadians record for most-games with two or less goals-

against in a row (Phoenix had gone 16 straight games with this defensive streak).  
  
The day drew nearer, and before I knew it, Chanukah had arrived. We all lit our Menorahs in Yeshiva, and sang some off-key Chanukah songs. We then packed into our 'tanks,' and sped down Bathurst St. en route to one of the last games in Maple Leaf Gardens, a struggling Toronto vs. a red-hot Phoenix.


The game was set to start at 7:30, so at 7:00 we parked in front of the stadium and started handing out pamphlets, urging people into our 'tank.' Suddenly, we were all Leaf fans, from the die-hard New York Islanders fan finishing all the potato latkas in the back, to the little guy in the front with the smashed hat who thought Mats Sundin was a non-kosher fish patty.

Not getting many people inside the mobile home, and on some weird inspiration, a friend of mine grabbed the microphone, and started announcing: "Chabad Lubavitch in conjunction with the Toronto Maple Leafs wish you a happy Chanukah. Come inside and light a Menorah, and may G-d bless the Leafs to win the game. Go Leafs go."

We were shocked to say the least, and terrified that we would be sued, kicked out, and thrown in jail to share a cell with a bunch of Aryans, and we rushed back to

tranquilize him, when we saw hundreds of people gathering outside our 'tank', all eager to light the Menorah.  
  
Some people even wanted to light two, or more (the Leafs obviously were in a scoring slump), and so we waited until the second period, all the while announcing the same message over the microphone. Then we scalped tickets and went to our seats to watch the game.

To the surprise and shock of everyone, Toronto outplayed Phoenix to a spectacular 5-2 trouncing, and on the way out, many more Jews joined in the Menorah lighting. We had to keep restocking doughnuts and latkahs, and we finished off the night singing Maoz Tzur with a bunch of strangers.

I don't know what 'sparked' (no pun intended) the Leafs, but our little miracle lasted more than eight days as the Leafs next destroyed the Rangers 7-4, and went on to secure a playoff berth (the city felt the cup fever like never before. Mayor Mel Lastman announced that they should 'paint the city blue'), and put up a good fight for Lord Stanley. 


*Zvi Hershovich is a freelance writer currently working in the yeshiva where he is putting together the first yeshiva ice-hockey team. Zvi is a frequent contributor to many publications and web-sites. He invites your comments at: [Cholentface2@yahoo.com](mailto:Cholentface2@yahoo.com)*

## Everyone Needs to Laugh Sometimes

The first Jewish President calls his mother in Queens and invites her for Chanukah.

"I'd like to," she says, "but it's so much trouble ... First, I have to get a cab to the airport, and I hate waiting on Queens Boulevard."  
  
"Mom! I'm president of the United States! I'll send Air Force One!"  
  
"Yes, but when we land I'll still have to carry my luggage through the airport, and try to find a cab. And you know what holiday crowds are like."

"Mom! I'll have a helicopter pick you up! You'll go straight from the plane to my front lawn!"

"I don't know... I'd still need a hotel room. And hotels are so expensive ... and they're not like they used to be."  
  
"Ma! You'll stay in the White House!"  
  
"Well ..." She thinks. "Ok dear." She Sighs, "I'll come for you."  
  
That afternoon, she s talking on the phone with one of her friends.  
  
"What's new?" The friend asks.  
  
"I'm visiting my son for Chanukah."  
  
"The doctor?" "No ... the other one." 

Are your jokes better than ours? send them to us: [info@theluminary.com](mailto:info@theluminary.com)